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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FLEMMING (Saint Lucia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

REQUESTS FOR HEARING (A/C.4/46/2, 4 and 5)

1. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Committee had before it a request for hearing relating to the question of New Caledonia (A/C.4/46/2). If there was no objection he would propose that the Committee should grant the request.

2. The proposal was adopted.

3. The CHAIRMAN noted that he had received two communications containing requests for hearing, one relating to foreign economic and other interests, under agenda item 100 (A/C.4/46/4) and the other relating to the United States Virgin Islands under agenda item 19 (A/C.4/46/5). If there was no objection, he would propose that, in accordance with the usual practice, the communications should be circulated as Committee documents and be considered at a subsequent meeting.

4. The proposal was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 100: ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/46/23 (part III); A/AC.109/1065, 1066, 1070, 1073, 1075-1078)

General debate

5. Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia) said that the basic rights of the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories could be implemented only under stabilized economic conditions, and therefore reaching economic development and self-sufficiency was undoubtedly one of the preconditions for the implementation of their right to self-determination in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). It followed that the unquestionable duty of administering Powers was to follow and influence foreign economic activities in Non-Self-Governing Territories so that they met the interests of their peoples.

6. Unfortunately, evaluation of that question both in the Committee of 24 and in the Fourth Committee had in the past been marked by ideological confrontation, which had diminished the objective character of both the discussion and the resolutions adopted. A number of delegations had based their positions on the dogmatic premises that the administering Powers were keeping the colonies in economic dependency in order to be able to exploit them and that the multinational corporations were motivated by the same interest. Those views in no way corresponded to present-day reality.

(Mr. Slaby, Czechoslovakia)

7. The positive contribution of foreign investments in Non-Self-Governing Territories was indisputable, despite their darker aspects. Those investments made it possible to develop the sphere of tourism. The development of banking and other activities stimulated the development of substantial sectors of the economies of the Non-Self-Governing-Territories and facilitated the growth of their populations' living standard. The role of the direct assistance provided by the Administering Powers could not be neglected either.

8. Czechoslovakia was not unaware of some of the negative phenomena attending the integration of the Non-Self-Governing Territories into the world market economy, for example, the growth of crime, drug abuse, drug trafficking and prostitution. Those, however, were not the specific characteristics of the Non-Self-Governing Territories alone; Czechoslovakia was beginning to face similar problems as the by-product of its transition towards a market economy. The way to overcome those problems was not through artificial isolation but by a decisive and responsible attitude on the part of both the governments of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the Administering Powers.

9. After the cessation of the ideological confrontation between East and West, it would be natural to make the texts of the draft resolution submitted on the question under consideration more realistic and rational. Unfortunately, the current year had brought no progress in that direction: the drafts submitted contained the old-fashioned provisions, were declaratory, did not reflect the objective development of the situation and reiterated the unacceptable name-calling of the past. Nor could his delegation accept the fact that they dealt with problems not related to the agenda of the Committee of 24 and the Fourth Committee, especially the question of apartheid.

10. In that connection, his delegation recommended that the Fourth Committee should review the controversial texts of the Special Committee with the aim of adjusting their content and wording so that they could be unanimously adopted. Czechoslovakia was prepared to participate in that process, whether in a working group, informal consultations by all members or a group of friends of the Chairman.

11. Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea) welcomed the participation in the Committee's work of the seven new Members of the United Nations, and noted with particular satisfaction that they included the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, to whose self-determination the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee had made a considerable contribution. With regard to the rapid political, economic and social changes taking place in world society, what was called for, in order to keep up with the times, was renewed dedication to the principles and purposes embodied in the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), and the other resolutions on decolonization. His delegation did not share the opinion of those who considered that the decolonization process had come to an end. There were

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

still dependent territories in the world and new developments which might lead to appeals by other peoples for the help of the United Nations in gaining their freedom.

12. In general, his delegation was satisfied with the progress of the decolonization process. In connection with the changes going on in the world, the Special Committee had in 1990 taken steps to reorganize its work for the purpose of increasing its effectiveness. The Working Group established for that purpose had submitted a report to the Committee in which it had recommended inter alia that from 1 January 1992 the Committee's two subcommittees should be merged. It had also been proposed, in the interests of rationalization and the consolidation of the resolutions on the small Territories, that an omnibus resolution should be adopted together with supplementary short resolutions on each individual Territory. It would be appropriate for the Fourth Committee to endorse the decisions of the Special Committee on those questions.

13. A third recommendation, which reflected the view of the overwhelming majority of members, including the representatives of the ANC and PAC, dealt with the need to continue the consideration of the question of apartheid under the relevant resolutions of the Committee. The language used in those resolutions should be dictated by prevailing circumstances. However, in dealing with the question of the activities of foreign economic and other interests, including military activities, the Committee should view them not only within the context of South Africa's policy of apartheid but also as applying to the remaining 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories. That would increase the relevance of the resolutions under consideration.

14. A certain amount of progress had also been made in implementing the fourth recommendation, dealing with the language of the Special Committee's resolutions. In the resolutions on military activities it was also necessary to keep in mind all 18 of the dependent Territories, in some of which, particularly Guam and New Caledonia, there were military bases. It was necessary to keep in mind also that the question was still important because the administering Powers were inclined to consider the dependent Territories, as the representative of France had noted in exercising his right of reply at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, as their sovereign territory, on which they could carry out whatever activities they pleased. That position clearly demonstrated the need to deal with those questions from the point of view of all the dependent territories.

15. The fifth recommendation concerned the need to broaden cooperation with administering Powers in the matter of the provision of information and the dispatch of visiting missions. With full and up-to-date information about the situation in such Territories, the United Nations would be able to encourage the development of the processes of self-determination there more actively. However few in numbers the peoples suffering under the yoke of colonialism might be, it was the Organization's duty to assist in speeding up the process of their liberation.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

16. With regard to the informal consultations between members of the Committee presided over by its Chairman at the forty-fifth session, his delegation considered it essential to make the recommendations worked out during those consultations official. Most of the recommendations were in accord with the recommendations of the Working Group of the Special Committee, which had been approved by that Committee as the basis for its future work. In that connection, his delegation called on the members of the Fourth Committee to examine the recommendations of the informal working group and approve them, especially in those areas where the points of view of the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee coincided.

17. Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America), after indicating that the Fourth Committee had reached a critical point in its existence and that reform of the Committee's role and work was necessary, said that the draft resolution on foreign economic interests and the draft decision on military activities which the Committee was considering ran directly counter to the new direction that members of the Committee had said it must take. Her Government called on the Fourth Committee to take a new look at the resolutions transmitted to it by the Special Committee. The discussion of many new ideas in the Special Committee had been encouraging, but the resulting resolutions did not reflect either the positive spirit of the discussions in the working groups of the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee, or current realities. The Fourth Committee had to take a long-overdue look at its original decolonization mandate to produce resolutions that were true to that mandate. The work of the Committee should reflect the dramatic changes that had taken place in the United Nations system and in the international arena.

18. The Committee should re-examine the provisions of Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter, which obligated all administering Powers to promote the well-being of the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories, and use those provisions as the basis for its work. As for the United Nations, it was originally intended to oversee the fulfilment of those obligations primarily by serving as a repository for information on the Territories submitted regularly by the administering Powers and other knowledgeable bodies. A series of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, in particular resolutions 1514 (XV), 1541 (XV), 1654 (XVI) and 1810 (XVII), enumerated the means by which the Organization could exercise its oversight function, including through the establishment of the Special Committee. The committees dealing with decolonization questions were meant to serve as a forum in which representatives of the Territories could present their views annually on the degree to which the administering Powers were fulfilling their obligations. The administering Powers agreed to submit to close international scrutiny because they recognized that their long-term interests would be furthered by participation in that constructive, public process.

19. For many years, the decolonization committees and the administering Powers had cooperated successfully in achieving the objectives of Chapter XI. In a way, those committees were the victims of their own success. With so few

(Mrs. Tahir-Kheli, United States)

Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining, the decolonization committees had begun to inject extraneous and anachronistic rhetoric into their debates and resolutions, rhetoric that bore little relevance to the actual situation of the Territories. Most importantly, the committees embraced the very troubling premise that the few remaining Territories on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories had failed to achieve a greater measure of self-government solely because of some persistent colonial animus on the part of the administering Powers. In reality, however, those few Territories, most of which shared similar characteristics in terms of geography, population and natural resources, represented unusual cases that required special attention in their particular evolution towards a greater measure of self-government.

20. The time had come for the Fourth Committee to abandon that approach in favour of promoting the original goals of Chapter XI. As an administering Power, her country recognized its continuing responsibilities under Chapter XI and was willing to cooperate with the decolonization committees if they were willing to adopt a constructive approach. The discussions earlier in the year in the working groups of the Fourth Committee and of the Special Committee had been a step towards cooperation. Her Government was encouraged by all the suggestions for reform presented to the working group over the past year. As a first step towards the discussion and implementation of those suggestions, members of the Committee should examine all of the resolutions transmitted by the Special Committee especially closely to determine whether they were in line with the original mandate of the Fourth Committee. Her Government believed that the resolutions had strayed from that mandate and that it was necessary to achieve positive changes at the current session by building on the constructive spirit of both working groups dealing with the question of reform.

21. Mr. KADRAT (Iraq) said that the United Nations was continuing to play an important role in the elimination of colonialism. Some peoples were still under the colonial yoke, which was hindering their progress and social and economic development. The aim of the colonialists was to keep those peoples in a state of backwardness, thus making it easier to control their natural resources.

22. Observing that administering Powers were required to carry out political, social and economic reforms, to strengthen the economic infrastructure of Non-Self-Governing Territories, and to help the population to develop their natural resources and train national cadres in various fields, he pointed out the illegality of foreign economic and military activities in those Territories and of their colonization, the result of which was to deprive the peoples of those territories of their lawful rights.

23. In southern Africa, the policy of racial discrimination and apartheid was clearly being preserved. That was confirmed by the leaders of South Africa's nationalist movements, who were demanding that the sanctions against South Africa should be maintained until there was really an end to the policy of

(Mr. Kadrat, Iraq)

racial discrimination. The racist regimes of South Africa and the Zionist entity represented a serious threat to international peace and security, in that they were continuing to cooperate in developing chemical, biological and other types of weapons of mass destruction. Iraq was boycotting South Africa in every sphere and had no relations of any kind with the country. It was time for the international community to put pressure on the South African regime and on countries which cooperated with it in order to make it renounce its policy of racial discrimination and apartheid, and to adopt a firm stand on the activities of foreign economic interests which were impeding the liberation and self-determination of other peoples.

24. Under the new world order, the United States now had the possibility of wielding absolute supremacy and was using all manner of means - such as pressure, threats and promises - to achieve its aims. The traditional concept of colonialism was giving way to the colonialism of the age of electronics, which made use of artificial satellites, laser-guided bombs and other means of destruction, of aggression and economic blockade. In such conditions, third world countries must display great vigilance, coordinate their activities and cooperate with one another.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

25. The Chairman suggested that the Committee should establish a working group of "Friends of the Chairman", the first meeting of which would be held after the Committee's next meeting.

26. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.